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June Meeting: Instead of a speaker from Victorian National Parks Service, we have Mr. John Clements, Fisheries and Wildlife Officer, to speak on "Ballarat's Wetlands". John, of course really needs no introduction but his subject will be full of interest.

This Excursion: 8th June. "Fungi" to Niggl's Bridge, and the leader will be Mr. A. Sonsee. 1.30pm at Crockers, or 2pm at the Creswick Bandstand. From there along the road past Koala Park to turn left into Jackson's Gully Road, just before Wattle Flat Road.

NEXT MEETING: (July) It is hoped to have a speaker from National Parks Service.

NEXT EXCURSION: Will be to the Castlemaine Area. Leader Mr. E. Perkins, Forest Officer.

LAST MEETING: Mr. W. Staples spoke and showed a number of very interesting and colorful slides on Marine Life. Of interest were the Pycnogonoids (Sea Spiders). These spider-like animals come in widely varying colors and sizes. Some might only be 3cm across, while others grow to 50cm. They are present in all oceans to a depth of 12000 ft.

LAST EXCURSIONS: About seven cars arrived at Crockers corner for our excursion to Durham Lead. We split there, with two cars going through one way and the rest going the other way, and we were supposed to meet in the middle (but didn't). Anyway, we had a enjoyable time, spotting numerous birds, amongst them, robins high up in a tree. The sight of various colored heaths covering a hillside captured everyone's imagination. Some climbed to the top, where there was an old "weekender" shack. The heath made a spectacular garden.

PROJECT JONAH: "Friends of the Earth" has mounted a campaign to have the world-wide slaughter of whales stopped. Information is available this meeting for your consideration, even though Ballarat is far from the sea - and whales.

FRASER ISLAND: It's off the Queensland coast near Maryborough, and it had the necessary potential for a national park of world standard, being the world's largest sand island. Then developers, then sand miners, moved in and now Fraser Island is the centre of a large political wrangle at Federal level.

"Habitat", an A.C.F. publication with a detailed report on the Island is available for study.

WOOD CHIP: Plans for wood chip expansion into East Gippsland have been temporarily shelved pending the L.C.C. report on East Gippsland. A pilot test plan for 300 acres near Genoa was to have begun in early 1975 but has been postponed.

Lake WENDOUREE: As far as I can gather from the information Cr. Foo gave Mr. Fry, speed boats and their engines have no lasting effect on the lakes and surrounding areas on which they are used. The tests are still continuing. (Outboard engines.) Lucky for the skiers.

FLINDERS RANGES AND THE GREAT OUTBACK: It's not surprising that most Victorians looking for the real Australian outback head for South Australia. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of that state lies within the arid 250mm (10 inch) rainfall belt, which is the unofficial border of the "outback".

The Flinders Ranges and the Birdsville Track are the two most popular outback areas. The Flinders are a scenic mountainous area 250 to 650km north of Adelaide, or two full days drive from Melbourne.

The camping parks at Arkaroola and Wilpena are the best places for a "base". From these two spots you can explore the most interesting and out-of-the-way places. The Flinders are excellent for touring, camping and bush-walking. Native Pine and Red River Gums are common, but undergrowth is scarce. The names of places around Arkaroola are tongue twisters. Names like Bolla Bollana, Menmerna, Paralana, Noodoonoodoona, and Burra Burra defy pronouncing.

The Birdsville Track is something of a legend in the Australian outback. It runs nearly 500 desolate kilometres from Marree in South Australia, to Birdsville, The gateway of the rich cattle lands of Queensland's Channel country.

It started as a cattle droving route in the 1880s. Homesteads sprang up along the route where periodic flooding brought good stock feed. Afghan camel trains were introduced to carry goods and supplies to people living there, because horses and bullocks could not survive the harsh living conditions. Thousands of cattle have died in droughts over the years. Some droughts lasted seven years. The motor vehicle appeared, and the track became a road. Now stock transports carry the cattle quickly and efficiently to market. Tourists are now following in the footsteps of the pioneers. But the country and the climate haven't changed. Drought still covers the road in parts with sand, and then the floods come and they put a stop on travel for months on end.

And the incredible heat of summer still takes the life of beast and man.

ENVIRONMENT STUDIES ASSOCIATION: Courses for 1975. There is a list of 10 courses on various Environment and Conservation subjects.

Two of the courses available are -

- 10/12th October Anglesea. Dr. J. Willis
Flowers of the Heathlands
- 17/19th October Anglesea. Mr. Roger Cowley
Birds of the Coastal Lands

Further details available from the Secretary.

EXECUTIVE NOTES: As decided at last meeting, after Treasurer's report, Membership is now \$1.50 per adult, 50¢ per junior (no joint or family membership)

1. Recommendations for affiliations to F.N.C.V. \$10, to W.V.F.N.C. \$3.00, and C.C.V. \$10
2. Recommendation from W.V.F.N.C. MINUTES THAT THIS CLUB protest the declaration of Acacia Armata as a noxious weed being a very good bird nesting habitat.
3. Recommendation from W.V.F.N.C. minutes that this club write to various M.P.s regarding finance for the Herbarium (at present very run down, financially and physically)

ON T.V. The A.B.C. puts on interesting documentaries at these times.

Sunday, 8pm, A Big Country.

Tuesday, 8pm, it used to be Wild Australia, now it is a variety of things. Last week it was "A Bay in the Balance" - Westernport.

POST-BOX:

North East Nat Newsletter (Tasmania)
"Ecos" CSIRO Environment Research
"Habitat" A.C.F. Magazine - Fraser Island
Field Guide to Grampians F.C.V.
E.S.A.V. Study Courses
C.C.V. Canadian Forest
Macedon Road Land Usage
Drainage and Lands Bill
W.V.F.N.C.A. Minutes
Mildura Campout
Geelong Naturalist

RETROSPECT: Remember that memorable excursion we had last year to Waterloo, Trawalla and Stoneleigh? It was the November excursion, and we had a very exciting time. 74 species of birds were sighted and 90 or more plants listed. Many of the birds were nesting, amongst them Grey Fantail, which we were able to get quite close to, wagtails, orioles, and satin flycatchers. At Stoneleigh (the property of Cr. and Mrs. Chris Hedges) we were very impressed by the waterfowl habitat constructed around the property. We were amazed to see more than 70 nankeen night herons, which we disturbed by one of the lakes. We were also tested on our bird sighting capacity trying to distinguish a pair of frogmouths and their chick in a pine tree near the homestead. We also saw a koala with her baby in a tree at one of the stops.

Reading through some of the old Newsletters I noticed that there was no report on the December excursion last year. Only two cars went out, but we had an interesting and enjoyable time. The Forest Commission or someone has built a little bar-be-que out at Spargo Creek forest, and we made use of it, by bar-b-queing our tea. After tea we went for a walk in the forest and saw some birds and flowers (but by now have forgotten what they were) Then we drove our cars up to a promising looking tree and waited for dark. At last we could turn on our spot-lights, and ~~xxx~~ someone tapped on the tree with a piece of wood. Two greater gliders appeared, and they sat and looked into our headlights and torches and spot-lights for a long time, so we were able to get a good look at them. Then they began to play about and to run up and down the tree. We could have sat there all night watching them, but the three young members had school the next day, so we set out for home. We surprised to see it was 11 o'clock. (In case anyone has forgotten, the excursion was planned for spotlighting.) The gliders have been in that tree for some time because once before we spotlighted there and they were in that tree.

Five people are being sent out there newsletter now. Would anyone else like it? It's a dollar a year for postage (life members excepted) If you don't want it mailed you can pick one up from the table on Fridays.

In our garden, we have a grapevine which is just near the kitchen window. The grapes were a bit late this year and have just started ripening. I can see lots of birds flying through the fernery over which the grapevine grows. There are the common birds, such as starling, sparrow, and blackbird, but I have also seen Eastern Spinebills, Yellow Wing Honeyeaters, which are after the Fuchsia, Silver Eyes, and Thornbills.

Contributed by Mr. P. Fry.

Next month Andrew McKenzie is going to contribute an article on Butterflies.